

APA: Made Easier

This guide provides accessibility to the basics of the APA writing style to help students use it correctly and write professionally. Under each section is an excerpt taken directly from the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010). Go to the page number that is listed in bold in each section for further information on a particular topic. *Go to www.apastyle.org for further help. The website provides tutorials that demonstrate sample title pages and reference pages.

REMEMBER: A cover page is always required and includes the running head of no more than 50 characters, which will then appear at the left margin of each page of your paper. **Page 41** clarifies the elements required on the cover page. Omit the Author Note. Check with your professor as to whether an Abstract is required.

I. Taken from “Writing Clearly and Concisely” on page 65:

*Practice **continuity** in your writing by using punctuation correctly, and through the use of transition words.

*The correct use of punctuation will link together ideas, and communicate the tone of your writing. Do not overuse or underuse one particular type of punctuation.

*Examples of transition words include; time links (then, next, after, while, since); cause-effect links (therefore, consequently, as a result); addition links (in addition, moreover, furthermore, similarly; contrast links (but, conversely, nevertheless, however, although).

II. Taken from “Strategies to Improve Writing Style” on page 70.

*Write from an outline. * Put aside the first draft and then re-read it later. * Ask a colleague to review and critique the draft for you.

III. Taken from “Grammar and Usage: Verbs” on page 77.

*Using the active voice is preferred in writing, although the passive voice may have a role when the object of the sentence is the focus, as below.

Active: We conducted the survey in a controlled setting.

Passive: The survey was conducted in a controlled setting.

In active voice, the subject does the action. In passive voice, the subject is acted upon.

IV. Taken from “The Mechanics of Style: Punctuation” on pages 87-92

***Spacing After Punctuation Marks** - Leave **one** space after commas, colons, and semicolons; periods that separate parts of a reference citation; and periods of the initials in personal names.

***When to Use a Comma:**

*Between elements in a series of three or more items (ex. the height, width, or depth).

* To set off a nonessential clause. (ex. Switch A, which was on a panel, controlled the recording device.

*To separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunction (Cedar shavings covered the floor, and paper was available for shredding and nest building.)

*To set off the year in exact dates (ex. April 18, 1992, was the correct date.)

*To set off the year in parenthetical reference citations. (ex. Kelsey, 1993, discovered...)

*To separate groups of three digits in most numbers of 1,000 or more.

***When to Use a Semicolon:**

* To separate two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction. (ex. The participants in the first study were paid; those in the second were unpaid.)

*To separate elements in a series that already contain commas. (ex. The color order was red, yellow, blue; blue, yellow, red; or yellow, red, blue.

***When to Use a Colon:**

*Between a grammatically complete introductory clause and a final phrase or clause that illustrates, extends, or amplifies the preceding thought. If the clause following the colon is a complete sentence, it begins with a capital letter. (ex. For example, Freud wrote of two urges: an urge toward union with other and an egoistic urge toward happiness.)

*In ratios and proportions *in references between place of publication and publisher. (ex. New York: Wiley.)

***When to Use Quotation Marks:**

***To quote directly an author's words exactly as in a text or a conversation**

*To introduce a word or phrase used as an ironic comment, as slang, or as an invented or coined expression. (ex. considered "normal" behavior)

*To set off the title or an article or chapter in a periodical or book when the title is mentioned in text. (ex. Riger's (1992) article, "Epistemological Debates, Feminist Voices: Science, Social Values, and the Study of Women")

*To reproduce material from a test item or verbatim instructions to participants. (ex. The first fill-in item was "could be expected to.....")

***Double or Single Quotation Marks -**

***In text:** Use double quotation marks to enclose quotations in text. Use single quotation marks within double quotation marks to set off material in the original source. (Ex. Miele (1993) found that "the 'placebo effect,' which had been verified in previous studies,

disappeared when [only the first group's] behaviors were studied in this manner" (p. 276).

***In block quotations (any quotations of 40 or more words):** Do not use quotation marks to enclose block quotations. Do use double quotation marks to enclose any quoted material within a block quotation.

***With other punctuation:** Place periods and commas within closing single or double quotation marks. Place other punctuation marks inside quotation marks only when they are part of the quoted material.

V. Taken from "Capitalization" on pages 101-103

***Words Beginning a Sentence:** Capitalize the first word in a complete sentence.

***Major Words in Titles and Headings:** Capitalize major words in titles of books and articles within the body of the paper. Conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions are not considered major words; however, capitalize all words of four letters or more. Capitalize all verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, both words in a hyphenated compound, and the first words after a colon or a dash in a title. (ex. "Memory in Hearing-Impaired Children: Implications for Vocabulary Development")

*When writing a reference page the rules are different, look on page 101 for the exception.

***Proper Nouns and Trade Names:**

*Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives and words used as proper nouns. (ex. Freudian slip)

*Capitalize names of university departments if they refer to a specific department within a specific university and complete names of academic course if they refer to a specific course. (ex. Sociology 101)

*Capitalize trade and brand names of drugs, equipment, and food.

*Capitalize nouns followed by numerals or letters that denote a specific place in a numbered series. (Ex. On Day 2 of Experiment 4)

*Capitalize Titles of Tests

VI. Taken from "Italics" on page 104

*Use italics for titles of books, periodicals, films, videos, TV shows, and microfilm publications.

*Use italics for the introduction of a new, technical, or key term or label.

VII. Taken from "Crediting Sources" on page 196-197

***When to Cite:** Cite the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, or research have directly influenced your work.

***Plagiarism:** Whether paraphrasing, quoting an author directly, or describing an idea that influenced your work, **you must credit the source – which includes quotation marks and page citations. Otherwise it is plagiarism. See also Union’s MSW Student Handbook for plagiarism policies.**

VIII. Taken from “Quoting and Paraphrasing” on page 170

***Direct Quotation of Sources:** When quoting, always provide the author, year, and specific page citation or paragraph number for nonpaginated material in the text and include a complete reference in the reference list.

***Block Quotes:** If the quotation comprises **40** or more words, display it in a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. Start such a block quotation on a new line and indent the block about a half inch from the left margin (in the same position as a new paragraph). Double space the entire quotation. At the end of a block quotation, cite the quoted source and the page or paragraph number in parentheses after the final punctuation mark.

***Accuracy of Quotations:** Direct quotations must be accurate. If any incorrect spelling, punctuation, or grammar in the source might confuse the readers, insert the word *sic*, italicized and bracketed, immediately after the error in the quotation.

***Changes from the Source Requiring Explanation:** Use three spaced ellipsis points (...) within a sentence to indicate that you have omitted material from the original source. Use four points to indicate any omission between two sentences.

***Citations within Quotations:** Do **not** omit citations embedded within the original material you are quoting. The words cited need not be included in the list of references. (ex. “In the United States, the American Cancer Society (2007) estimated that about 1 million cases of NMSC and 59,940 cases of melanoma would be diagnosed in 2007, with melanoma resulting in 8,110 deaths” (Miller et al., 2009, p. 209).

IX. Taken from “Citing References in Text” on page 174-179

*References in APA publications are cited in text with an author-date citation system and listed alphabetically in the reference list.

***One Work by one Author:** The author-date method of citation requires that the surname of the author and the year of publication be inserted in the text at the appropriate point: (ex. Kessler (2003) found that among epidemiological samples) (ex. Early onset results in a more persistent and severe course (Kessler, 2003).

***One Work by Multiple Authors:** When a work has two authors, cite both names every time the reference occurs in text. When a work has three, four, or five authors cite all authors the first time the reference occurs; in subsequent citations include only the

surname of the first author followed by “et al.” and the year if it is the first citation of the reference within a paragraph. (ex. Kisangau et al. (2007))

X: Taken from “Reference List” on page 180-186

*APA requires that the reference list be double-spaced and that entries have a hanging indent, “meaning that the first line of each reference is set flush left and subsequent lines are indented (APA, 2010, p. 37).” Only the first word in a book title is capitalized.

***Order of References in the Reference List:** Arrange entries in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author followed by initials of the authors’ given name.

***Order of Works with Group Authors or with no Authors:** Alphabetize group authors, such as associations or government agencies, by the first significant word of the name. If there is not author, move the title to the author position, and alphabetize the entry by the first significant word of the title.

***Editors:** In a reference to an edited book, place the editors’ names in the author position, and enclose the abbreviation Ed. or Eds. in parentheses after the last editor’s name. The period follows the parenthetical abbreviation. (ex. (Eds.).)

* The name of the book editor should be preceded by the word *IN*,

(Author, A. A. (2008). Title of chapter. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xx). Location: Publisher.)

***Article or chapter titles:** Capitalize only the first words or the title and of the subtitle, if any, and any proper nouns; do not italicize the title or place quotation marks around it. Finish the element with a period.

***Periodical title: Journals, newsletters, magazines:** Give the periodical title in full, in uppercase and lowercase letters. Italicize the names of the periodical. (ex. *Social Science Quarterly*)

***Nonperiodical title: Books and reports:** Capitalize only the first words of the title and of the subtitle, if any and any proper nouns; italicize the title.

***Publication Information**

***Periodicals: Journals, newsletters, magazines:** Give the volume number after the periodical title; italicize it. Include the journal issue number along with the volume number if the journal is paginated separately by issue. Give the issue number in parentheses immediately after the volume number; do not italicize it. Give page numbers, and finish the element with a period. ex. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84, 508-525.

***Nonperiodicals: Books and Reports:** ex. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

* **Taken from “Reference Examples” on pages 193-215** - The book lists examples of references in APA Style. Look up the appropriate example to cite your source correctly.